JFK Assassination System Date: 8/27/201

Identification Form

Agency Information

AGENCY : WILDEROTTE
RECORD NUMBER : 178-10004-10087

RECORD SERIES : ASSASSINATION-RELATED MATERIALS

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : ASSASSINATION-RELATED MATERIALS (3)

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : CIA
FROM : CARL, OFFICE OF THE DD/S&T
TO : BUCHEN, PHILIP

TITLE : [Restricted]

DATE : 07/10/1975
PAGES : 17

SUBJECTS :
CIA
ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES
CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

DOCUMENT TYPE : REPORT
CLASSIFICATION : Secret
RESTRICTIONS : Consulted
CURRENT STATUS : Withhold
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 08/06/1993

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Transmittal memo and 15-page report.

178-10004-10087

DATE: 10 July 1975

(24)

Office of the DD/S&T

TO: Mr. Phillip Buchen

SUBJECT: Attached Report

CURRENT INFO

REMARKS:

Phil:

Attached is the interim report on the problem you and I have discussed recently. I stress the term interim since we have received new information from Defense as recently as yesterday and have not exhausted our own search for information within CIA.

Recognizing your concern that the investigation be conducted with the participation of some outside person or group -- and also the fact that we were unable to find a satisfactory solution -- let me briefly outline the approach I followed.

I stressed objectivity and tried to assure that no persons who were potentially a party to the activities in question had any opportunity to destroy information or material which might be related.

My Associate Deputy Director, Dr. Sayre Stevens, was the prime investigator with technical advice from Dr. Tom Nevison, an MD with an outstanding research background but hired by

CIA only a couple of years ago and could not possibly have had any prior knowledge or involvement. Additionally, I used personnel from my own staff to assure that compilation of inventory, etc. was done in presence of people representing me, who again could have had no prior involvement.

As I noted earlier, we are continuing our investigation internally as well as jointly with DOD. We will keep you informed.

Carl

SUMMARY REPORT ON CIA INVESTIGATION OF MKNAOMI

Project Discovery.

The initial identification of the relationship between the CIA and the Army Biological Laboratory at Fort Detrick as a possible questionable activity requiring further investigation occurred in late April of this year. It resulted from information provided by a CIA officer not directly associated with the project in response to the repetitive appeals of the DCI that all past activities which might now be considered questionable be brought to the attention of Agency management. As a result of the information provided by him and by two other officers identified as having some awareness of the project, it became clear that further investigation of the matter was in order. The three identified the project at Fort Detrick as having involved the development of BW and possibly CW agents and associated dissemination systems that were suitable for clandestine use against human targets. They moreover identified letha agents as among those involved in the project.

Concern about these assertions was heightened because the A/DDS&T had noted in a recent review of the 1963 IG Survey of the Technical Services Division (TSD) that approximately $90,000 in that current fiscal year was spent at Fort Detrick "for the maintenance of a BW capability". This statement appeared so important that a quick check was made to determine its significance. In response to questions about the activity, the cognizant officer in TSD -- now the Office of Technical Service (OTS) -- reported that a small effort had been carried on at Fort Detrick, but that it related to the development of incapacitants and BW/CW

detection and did not carry the serious implications of the IG's report. It had in any event been terminated some years ago. The A/DDS&T was satisfied with this response. When new and more disturbing information about the nature of the Fort Detrick activity emerged, however, the words of the IG Survey tended to give it credibility. Thus, late in April 1975 a search was begun for any records or other information available on the project. Difficulties were immediately encountered because the project cryptonym could not be identified. The search for records of fund transfers to Fort Detrick did ultimately produce information in that regard, however, and checks by the Office of Security on one of the individuals identified as having been involved in Fort Detrick activities did provide the MKNAOMI cryptonym. This enabled OTS to recall the proper files from Records Center; two MKNAOMI files were retrieved. Some additional information was also produced from the Office of Logistics files. This collection of material largely confirmed the nature of the project as reported by the informants and identified a number of people involved in the activity. Additional cause for concern resulted from the association of several of these people with specific assassinatic plans as revealed in the IG's report on that activity.

A major concern after the discovery of the records involved the disposition of a stockpile of BW agents and toxins maintained by Fort Detrick for possible Agency use. It was not known whether or not these materials had been destroyed along with the Army's BW stockpiles in response to Presidential Directives of November 1969 and February 1970. An unsigned memo raising the question of the disposition of Agency materials maintained by Fort Detrick posed the option of having it stored in a commercial laboratory. It was the impression of those in OTS who were familiar with the project that the material had in fact been destroyed but no records confirming it could be found. In an attempt to find such confirmation, laboratory storage facilities in OTS were searched and in the

course of that search about 11 grams of shellfish toxin and 6 mg of cobra venom -- but none of the other materials -- were discovered.

Subsequent to the decision in late April that a full investigation of the Ft. Detrick project was needed, all information uncovered was passed to the DCI, to staff members of the Rockefeller Commission and to the White House staff handling Intelligence Community investigation matters. In June, Senator Church was informed by Rod Hills of the White House that a sensitive activity was under investigation.

Sources of Information.

This summary report on the activity is based upon an investigation utilizing: (1) the files and documents uncovered as a result of the initial search which are limited and contain only a small number of Agency-originated documents; (2) the material found in OTS storage which includes the shellfish toxin and several pieces of delivery hardware; (3) interviews voluntarily given by current Agency employees who had some knowledge of the project and by a number of retired employees indicated by the records as having been more deeply involved at stages of particular interest. (Included in the latter category are Tom Karamessines, Cornelius Roosevelt, Ray Treichler, and Nathan Gordon); (4) information contained in the IG's Report on assassination planning and (5) information developed by a DOD investigation initiated as a result of conversations with the White House about the matter; this information was only recently received and has not been widely incorporated in this report, however.

Special Operations Division of Fort Detrick.

The Agency association with Fort Detrick involved the Special Operations Division (SOD) of that facility. This Division was apparently responsible for

developing special applications for BW agents and toxins. The principal customer of its activities appears to have been the U.S. Army Special Forces. Its concern was both with the development of suitable agents and delivery mechanisms for special use in paramilitary situations. These applications clearly included one-on-one situations in which clandestine delivery was a concern. Both standard BW agents and biologically derived toxins were investigated by the Division. Discussions with former Fort Detrick employees indicates that SOD was first established as a distinct, highly secure activity within Fort Detrick in about 1948, though no records going back that far have been found. The Division was abolished in 1970 or 1971 as the Fort Detrick operation was terminated.

CIA Relationships with SOD.

The CIA relationship with SOD was formally established in May 1952 through a memorandum of agreement with the Army Chief Chemical Officer for the performance of certain research and development in the laboratory facilities of the Special Operations Division of the Army Biological Laboratory at Fort Detrick. The animus for establishing this relationship seems to have been a belief in OTS that the special capabilities of the Fort Detrick group and its access to biological materials of all sorts provided the Agency with expertise and capabilities which were appropriate to its function and not otherwise available. Discussions indicate that the perception of the requirement for such capabilities was tied to earlier OSS experience. Initial funding was at the $200,000 a year level which grew to a high point in FY 1958 of $390,000 and then dwindled to $75,000 a year in the late 1960's. Though there appear to be some gaps in available funding records, total Agency funding in the period from FY 1953 through FY 1970 is

estimated to have been somewhat more than $3 million. These funds were apparently used to generally augment the level of effort undertaken by SOD. Agency requirements for specific R&D were not levied in any programmatic way, but rather the Agency identified particular work being done by SOD as part of its program supporting the Army Special Forces as being of interest and then levied requirements for the customizing of such developments for Agency use. Through the course of years, Agency objectives in the project became better defined. Thus a project approval memo of 1967 identifies the four functional categories of project activity:

a. Maintenance of a stockpile of incapacitating and lethal agents in readiness for operational use;

b. Maintenance, assessment and evaluation of a designated balance of biological and chemical disseminating systems for operational readiness;

c. Adaptation and testing of a non-discernible microbioinoculator (a dart device suitable for the clandestine and imperceptible inoculation with BW/CW agents) to determine compatibility with various materials and to assure that the microbioinoculator cannot be identified structurally or easily detected upon a detailed autopsy; and

d. Provide technical support and consultation on request to meet ad hoc requirements related to offensive and defensive BW/CW.

In the later years the activities dwindled to the point of simply maintaining a stockpile of agents and delivery systems for possible Agency use.

Project Management within CIA.

From its outset the project was characterized by a compartmentation that was extreme even by CIA standards. Only two or three Agency officers at any given time were cleared for access to Fort Detrick activities. This work was managed first within the Biology Branch and later in the Chemistry Branch of TSD. Because of the sensitivity of the activity, queries by operations officers as to the availability of materials and delivery systems of the type being developed at Fort Detrick were automatically turned away by TSD unless initial approval for contact had been given by the Deputy Director for Plans. Even when this was the case, the Chief of TSD often referred the operations officer directly to one of the cleared officers dealing with Fort Detrick and was never informed as to the nature of the discussions. This method of procedure has been confirmed both through interviews and by the IG report on assassination planning. No written records were kept. Though some CIA-originated documents have been found in the project files, it is clear that only a very limited documentation of activities took place. No records on such things as material control, receipt, delivery, destruction, etc. can be found. No documents relating to any possible operational use of the material have been found. The files as they exist are quite different from those normally maintained in the course of a typical CIA R&D project. As noted above, funding to the project was provided simply on the basis of augmenting the level of effort established by Army funding. There appears to have been no relation of funding to specific tasking, nor can any strict accounting of funds on the basis of effort expended in the Agency's behalf be found. Project officers with whom discussions were held stated that the funding was simply provided to maintain the availability to the Agency of the capabilities

of SOD. Finally, there is little evidence of much specific program definition on the part of the Agency. Though occasional specific requests for material or for investigations relating to the solution of a hypothetically posed operational problem can be found, the Agency with one or two exceptions through the years appears to have ridden on a program generated internally by SOD largely on the basis of Special Forces requirements. There are one or two exceptions which will be discussed below.

Activities of Peculiar CIA Interest.

Though discussions with people associated with the project reflect an overriding interest in incapacitants, particularly in later years, available records make it clear that CIA interests included maintaining a stockpile of lethal materials and delivery systems. The evidence indicates that the Agency relied upon the use of specific BW agents and toxins being investigated as a normal part of the Army's BW program. However, directions were given to investigate such matters as agent stability over varying periods of time, the suitability of specific agents for preparation in dry form, the development of dart coatings, and the preparation of materials in a form suitable for dusting of clothes, pillows, etc.

Primary Agency interest seemed to relate to the development of dissemination equipment to be used with a standard set of agents kept on the shelf. A number of such dissemination devices appear to be peculiarly suited for the type of clandesti use one might associate with Agency operations. Some of these were included among hardware stored for the Agency at Edgewood Arsenal subsequent to the closure of SOD: attache cases rigged to disseminate an agent into the air, a cigarette

case rigged to disseminate an agent when lighted, a fountain pen dart launcher, an engine head bolt designed to release an agent when heated, a fluorescent light starter to activate the light and then release an agent, etc. Available records do not indicate whether or not all these were developed specifically for the CIA, though the DOD investigation has identified the head bolt device as falling into such a category. The easy association of this equipment with specific Agency requirements because of its nature is apt to be misleading, however. At a meeting in June 1952, at the very outset of the Agency's association with SOD when CIA representatives stated they as yet had no specific requirements, a list of SOD priorities for work on dissemination devices was provided. This dissemination list included such things as cigarettes, chewing gum, cigarette lighters, wrist watches, fountain pens, rings, etc. Presumably work on these devices was already underway in response to Army Special Forces requirements. Nevertheless, the Agency clearly showed an interest in such devices and levied requirements for the special preparation of some.

One development peculiarly associated with the CIA was the "microbioinoculato which was an extremely small dart device which could be fired through clothing to penetrate the skin so as to inoculate him with an agent of some sort without the target's perception of being hit. An added fillip to this development was the requirement that no indications of the use of such a device be discernable in the course of autopsy. A large amount of Agency attention was given to the problem of incapacitating guard dogs. Much of the equipment delivered to the Agency and some of the testing undertaken by it involved a dart delivery system carrying dog incapacitants, and an antidote used subsequently to restore the dog

to normal activity. Though most of the dart launchers used in these developments were developed for the Army, the Agency did request the development of a small hand-held dart launcher for its peculiar needs.

Clearly a lot of work was done on human incapacitation. OTS apparently received continuing requests for safe, effective and rapidly acting, incapacitating devices. Much work was done in trying to use the dart system for such purposes, but real success was never actually achieved. Since larger amounts of appropriate agent are required to incapacitate a human than to kill him, no scheme was developed for introducing sufficient amounts through the use of darts. Attempts were made to solve this problem increasing the area of the darts available for coating and for making a dart which would dissolve in tissue which could thereby introduce more material into the system. Work on this project was underway when the association with SOD ended and Edgewood Arsenal endeavored to complete the project using unexpended Fort Detrick funds. Success was not achieved, however. One reason for the preoccupation of those involved in the project with the incapacitant problem may well have been the substantially greater difficulty of solving it when compared to developing lethal mechanisms.

Substantial work was also done for the Agency in the development of spoilants for agricultural products, biological materials for the contamination of petroleum stores, and agents for use in the destruction of electronics, optical systems, structural materials, etc. At times in the history of the project, requirements for such materials as these were apparently very high on the Agency's list.

Shellfish Toxin.

By the late 1960's, a stockpile of some 15 to 20 different BW agents and toxins was maintained on a regular basis by SOD for possible Agency use. The supply included such agents as food poisons, infectious viruses, lethal botulinum toxin, paralytic shellfish toxin, snake (krait) venon, Microsporeum gypseum which produces severe skin disease, etc. Varying amounts of these materials ranging from 100 grams to 100 milligrams were maintained.

As noted above, with the Presidential Order requiring the destruction of Army BW and toxin stockpiles, the question was raised as to the disposition of Agency materials. Though specific accounting for each agent on the list is not on hand, DOD indicates that, with the likely exception of the shellfish toxin, all of these materials were in fact destroyed by SOD personnel.

The shellfish toxin -- along with 8 milligrams of cobra venom -- was found by David Boston, currently Chief of the Chemistry Branch, in Vault B10 in the basement of South Building which houses OTS. This vault is a lightly used laboratory area and historically associated with the Biology and Chemistry Branches of OTS. It has been regularly used for the storage of dangerous materials of various types. In past years, the combination to the vault had been available only to the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Chemistry Branch and their secretary. More recently, the combination had been given to other members of the Chemistry Branch as well. With the discovery of the material on 20 May, however, the combination was changed and is now available only to the Chief of the Chemistry Branch, his secretary, and OTS security officers. On 13 June the vault was put under 24-hour guard.

The freezer in which the toxin was found is located under one of the work benches in the laboratory. The Fort Detrick material was the only thing in the freezer and was in two one-gallon cans along with several smaller containers. There were no labels on the gallon cans, but on top of each was a folded piece of paper with pertinent information about the contents. This information provided the types and amounts of material and the date on which it was put into storage. The shellfish toxin was, according to this information, put into the freezer in February 1970, and the cobra venom, in February 1961. The shellfish toxin was packaged in several different forms including two individual doses in tablet form.

The discovery of the material was a result of repeated attempts by Boston to determine what disposition had been made of Agency BW materials held by Fort Detrick. In making one more check on this, he called Nate Gordon, a former Chief of the Chemistry Branch, who retired in September 1972, and asked him if he knew what the disposition had been. Gordon stated that he thought that perhaps some of the shellfish toxin might not have been destroyed and was in storage in OTS. In following up on this lead, Boston found the material in the freezer.

Though hard to understand, such material could in fact be stored for so long without anyone being aware of it. The laboratory is no longer used for the type of work for which it was originally built and had become a disordered storage facility. There have been no requirements for use of the freezer in the intervening years and it is indeed possible that no occasion arose to investigate the contents of the freezer. There have been no reported functioning difficulties with the freezer during this entire period.

After finding the shellfish toxin in the vault, a complete inventory was taken. A large number of dangerous chemicals or drugs of various types were found. These materials relate to a number of past programs of TSD, including the drug project, the development of harassment materials for crowd control or meeting disruption, crop contamination programs, etc. Small amounts of several other lethal preparations were found. Two of these are known to have been obtained by the Agency for testing at Fort Detrick. Nothing is known about three others. Also found were a number of L-Pills issued to agents, and formerly to U-2 pilots, for suicide purposes in the event of capture.

Boston contended that he had no recollection of the shellfish toxin having been obtained from Fort Detrick and stored in the laboratory. On 30 June, discussions were held with Dr. Gordon in an interview at which Boston was also presen Gordon stated that the toxin had in fact been called back from Fort Detrick and stored in the laboratory on the basis of his own decision which resulted from conversations with Boston. It was their belief that the cost and difficulty of isolating the shellfish toxin were so great that it simply made no sense to have it destroyed. Apparently no one, including the Chief of TSD, was told of this decision or the fact that the material had been delivered by Fort Detrick. As Gordon recalled, this took place prior to his being told by the Chief of TSD to inform Fort Detrick that destruction of the material on the inventory list should take place. Boston who was present during this discussion took no issue with Gordon's account. Neither could recall precisely how the material was delivered to OTS, but the DOD investigation indicates that it was delivered to Boston by someone from Fort Detrick.

Gordon was certain that the shellfish toxin in storage in OTS is the same toxin as that listed on the inventory. There is, however, a discrepancy between the amount in storage as calculated from the labels and the amount shown on the inventory. Since the material in storage is in several different forms and complete reliance is placed upon labeling, however, no real discrepancy may actually exist.

Discussions with Karamessines have established that he and Helms were aware of the disposition question and that a clear decision had been made that the Agency stockpile should be destroyed by the Army and that, in accordance with Presidential Directives, the CIA should get completely out of the BW business.

The explanation given by Gordon as to how the shellfish toxin came to be in Agency storage is fully consistent with other available information. He stated that the material was always handled with extreme care. Undoubtedly it was simply transferred from one freezer to another and in his view was continually under adequate control. He is certain that nothing was done with it subsequent to its delivery and prior to his departure from the Agency in 1972. Boston has given assurance that it was untouched subsequent to that.

After the discovery of the material, OTS was told to investigate ways in which they could safely dispose of it with full documentation. Edgewood Arsenal was contacted and arrangements were made to deliver the material to Edgewood for disposal on 11 June 1975. The disposal was to be witnessed by a representative from the IG's office. On the day prior to the scheduled delivery, these arrangements were cancelled, however, because the DD/S&T wished to consider further ways of insuring that the destruction of the material could not be later

misinterpreted. Upon informing Edgewood Arsenal of this decision, Boston was told that while Edgewood would dispose of chemical material for the CIA, it would not do so in the case of biological materials since that was not consistent with the mission of the arsenal. No further efforts toward the disposal of the material have taken place, and it remains under guard in the OTS vault.

Operational Uses of MKNAOMI Material.

There is no record associating the project with actual operations. Discussions with those involved in the project indicate that hand-launchers with

darts loaded with dog incapacitant may have been delivered for use in S.E. Asia. They also indicate that some of the material or crop spoilants may have been employed. While no direct connections to assassination planning have been found, there are some disturbing similarities between the agents being investigated at Fort Detrick and some of the reported schemes for incapacitating or assassinating Castro. For example, botulinum pills were reportedly provided in February 1961 and again in April 1962 for use against Castro. Such pills were made for the Agency at Fort Detrick and the record shows the delivery of some in the same time period as the 1962 attempt. Another scheme in 1960 involved the treatment of cigars with botulinum toxin; the comparable treatment of cigarettes is reported in MKNAOMI files. Consideration was given to the administration of shellfish toxin with a pin device in late 1960. Both the toxin and pin delivery devices were developed at Fort Detrick. The diving suit scheme in 1963 involved dusting the inside of the suit with a fungus which would produce madura foot, a serious, non-specific, skin disease. Work

on fungal agents generally compatible with such an approach was underway at Fort Detrick shortly before this scheme was hatched and the agent was prepared at Agency direction in a form suitable for application to clothing, pillow cases, and so on. Tuberculosis germs with which the breathing apparatus of the suit were to be contaminated were available at Fort Detrick though not included in Agency stocks. Finally, the general presence of BW agents or toxins in all of these plans suggests the strong influence of work carried on at Fort Detrick.

None of the interviews undertaken in the course of this investigation provide information about specific support to operations which may have involved assassination. Roosevelt, who was Chief of TSD from 1960-1962, believed that discussions involving assassination took place but claimed to know few of the details and was skeptical as to the seriousness of such discussions. Treichler, Chief of the Biology Branch during this period, denied ever having received requests for such support or providing it, but these assertions appear incompatible with information he earlier provided to the IG's office during its investigation of assassination attempts. Treichler may constitute a connection between the MKNAOMI project and the assassination plots involving Castro. He was the officer responsible for MKNAOMI during this period. The records show his giving direction in specific terms to the preparation of materials at Fort Detrick matching those mentioned in the assassination schemes. Finally, the IG's report indicates that he delivered such material to other elements of the Agency. Beyond the Castro schemes, no suggestion can be found that any of these materials or devices was ever considered for use for lethal purposes.